

Trawling ban begins in state tonight

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Kochi: While the rest of west coast has a 61-day ban on trawling, Kerala has followed a 47-day ban since 1994. The ban this year would come into force on June 14 midnight. But the demand for a two-month ban in two phases is growing louder.

The state recorded a catch of 8.29 lakh tonnes in 2012, but since then fish landings on Kerala shores have nosedived. It came down to 4.82 LT in 2015 and 5.23 LT in 2016. According to Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute's marine fish landing estimates, a catch of 40,000 tonnes was recorded during the period from June 15 to July 31, 2016. "After the trawling ban period last year, a catch of 90,000 tonne was recorded off Kerala coasts in August," said T V Sathianandan, head, Fishery Resources Assessment Division, CMFRI.

He said that anchovies, white sardine, flower tail shrimp and Indian white shrimp are some of the major species which are caught during the monsoon trawl ban period off Kerala coasts by traditional fishermen.

"Since 1994, Kerala had been having a 47-day trawling ban. All the other nine coastal states except Kerala have, however, decided to go for a 61-day ban. Following a case being filed in the apex court by a NGO from Goa, Karnataka which also had a 47-



ENTERING OFF SEASON: Fish workers pack the nets after anchoring the trawling boats at Kalamukku fishing harbour in Vypeen on Tuesday ahead of the trawling ban

day ban also opted for 61 days," said Charles George, state president, Kerala Matsya Thozhilali Aikyaavedi.

An economic valuation of seasonal fishing ban (SFB) in five maritime states including four south states and Gujarat by the ministry of environment and forests showed an improved ecosystem in the form of catch, fisher income, biodiversity, respite to the sea floor and reduced carbon emissions. It restores coastal ecosystems and supports fisheries. In 2014, Rs 8.3 billion was saved on diesel during fishing

ban. The estimated economic value based on landing price of the incremental growth of fish attained due to fishing ban of 45-60 days was a total of Rs 1.07 billion in the five states.

The ban should be combined with other measures such as an ecosystem-based approach, marine protected areas, no-fishing zones, regulated entry, catch quotas, certification, protection of endangered species, mesh-size regulation and minimum legal size at capture, it recommended.